

**Amendments to the Claims:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

**Listing of Claims:**

1           **Claim 1 (currently amended):** A driving assistance apparatus  
2           for displaying and guiding a peripheral condition of a vehicle  
3           in an easily understanding manner, comprising:  
4                 a camera mounted on a peripheral portion of the vehicle;  
5                 an virtual observing point converting unit which converts  
6           an image picked up by the camera into an image viewed from a  
7           virtual observing point;  
8                 [[a]] an image synthesizing unit which synthesizes the  
9           images viewed from a virtual observing point to display a  
10          peripheral condition of the vehicle;  
11                 an obstacle sensing unit which senses presence of an  
12          obstacle and which measures at least one of a distance from the  
13          own vehicle up to an obstacle and a direction of the obstacle;  
14          and  
15                 a safety area predicting unit which predicts a safety area  
16          of the peripheral portion of the own vehicle, in which the  
17          obstacle is not present, based upon the information acquired by  
18          the obstacle sensing unit.

1           **Claim 2 (original):** The driving assistance apparatus as  
2           claimed in claim 1, further comprising:  
3                 a safety area superposing unit which superposes the safety  
4           area on the image synthesized by the image synthesizing unit for

5 display the superposed area.

1 Claim 3 (currently amended): A driving assistance apparatus  
2 for displaying and guiding a peripheral condition of a vehicle  
3 in an easily understanding manner, comprising:

4 a camera mounted on a peripheral portion of the vehicle;

5 a virtual observing point converting unit which converts an  
6 image picked up by the camera into an image viewed from a virtual  
7 observing point;

8 [[a]] an image synthesizing unit which synthesizes the  
9 images viewed from a virtual observing point to display a  
10 peripheral condition of the vehicle;

11 an obstacle sensing unit which senses presence of an  
12 obstacle and which measures at least one of a distance from the  
13 own vehicle up to an obstacle and a direction of the obstacle;  
14 and

15 an obstacle area predicting unit for predicting an obstacle  
16 area; and

17 an obstacle area superposing unit which superposes the  
18 obstacle area on the image synthesized by the image synthesizing  
19 unit for display the superposed area.

1 Claim 4 (currently amended): ~~The driving assistance~~  
2 ~~apparatus as claimed in claim 1,~~ A driving assistance apparatus  
3 for displaying and guiding a peripheral condition of a vehicle  
4 in an easily understanding manner, comprising:

5 a camera mounted on a peripheral portion of the vehicle;

6 an virtual observing point converting unit which converts

7     an image picked up by the camera into an image viewed from a  
8     virtual observing point;

9             an image synthesizing unit which synthesizes the images  
10     viewed from a virtual observing point to display a peripheral  
11     condition of the vehicle;

12             an obstacle sensing unit which senses presence of an  
13     obstacle and which measures at least one of a distance from the  
14     own vehicle up to an obstacle and a direction of the obstacle;  
15     and

16             a safety area predicting unit which predicts a safety area  
17     of the peripheral portion of the own vehicle, in which the  
18     obstacle is not present, based upon the information acquired by  
19     the obstacle sensing unit;

20             wherein the obstacle sensing unit corresponds includes a  
21     distance measuring sensor capable of measuring a distance from  
22     the own sensor up to the obstacle, and outputs the shortest  
23     distance from the own vehicle among the detected obstacles as the  
24     distance up to the obstacle,

25             wherein the safety area predicting unit predicts a safety  
26     area corresponding to an area is detectable by the distance  
27     measuring sensor and the area is located within one of a sphere  
28     and a circle where the distance up to the obstacle is defined as  
29     a radius, while a mounting position of the distance measuring  
30     sensor is used as a center of the sphere or the circle.

1             **Claim 5 (currently amended):** ~~The driving assistance~~  
2     ~~apparatus as claimed in claim 3;~~ A driving assistance apparatus  
3     for displaying and guiding a peripheral condition of a vehicle

4       in an easily understanding manner, comprising:

5             a camera mounted on a peripheral portion of the vehicle;

6             an virtual observing point converting unit which converts  
7       an image picked up by the camera into an image viewed from a  
8       virtual observing point;

9             an image synthesizing unit which synthesizes the images  
10       viewed from a virtual observing point to display a peripheral  
11       condition of the vehicle;

12            a first obstacle sensing unit for measuring a distance from  
13       the own vehicle up to an obstacle and a direction of the  
14       obstacle, and also for sensing presence of the obstacle by way  
15       of a sensor;

16            a second obstacle sensing unit which senses presence of an  
17       obstacle and which measures at least one of a distance from the  
18       own vehicle up to an obstacle and a direction of the obstacle;

19            an obstacle area predicting unit for predicting an obstacle  
20       area; and

21            an obstacle area superposing unit which superposes the  
22       obstacle area on the image synthesized by the image synthesizing  
23       unit for display the superposed area;

24            wherein the first and second obstacle sensing ~~unit includes~~  
25       units include an ultrasonic-wave sensor capable of measuring a  
26       distance from the own sensor up to the obstacle, and outputs the  
27       shortest distance from the own vehicle among the detected  
28       obstacles as the distance up to the obstacle; and

29            wherein the obstacle area predicting unit predicts an area  
30       where an obstacle is present, that corresponds to an area  
31       detectable by the ultrasonic-wave sensor, and the area located

32 outside one of a sphere and a circle where the distance up to the  
33 obstacle is defined as a radius, while a mounting position of the  
34 ultrasonic-wave sensor is used as a center of the sphere or  
35 circle.

1 Claim 6 (currently amended): ~~The driving assistance~~  
2 ~~apparatus as claimed in claim 3,~~ A driving assistance apparatus  
3 for displaying and guiding a peripheral condition of a vehicle  
4 in an easily understanding manner, comprising:

5 a camera mounted on a peripheral portion of the vehicle;  
6 an virtual observing point converting unit which converts  
7 an image picked up by the camera into an image viewed from a  
8 virtual observing point;

9 an image synthesizing unit which synthesizes the images  
10 viewed from a virtual observing point to display a peripheral  
11 condition of the vehicle;

12 a first obstacle sensing unit for measuring a distance from  
13 the own vehicle up to an obstacle and a direction of the  
14 obstacle, and also for sensing presence of the obstacle by way  
15 of a sensor;

16 a second obstacle sensing unit which senses presence of an  
17 obstacle and which measures at least one of a distance from the  
18 own vehicle up to an obstacle and a direction of the obstacle;

19 an obstacle area predicting unit for predicting an obstacle  
20 area; and

21 an obstacle area superposing unit which superposes the  
22 obstacle area on the image synthesized by the image synthesizing  
23 unit for display the superposed area;

24            wherein the first and second obstacle sensing ~~unit includes~~  
25            units include one of an ultrasonic-wave sensor having a plurality  
26            of ultrasonic-wave oscillating sources and an ultrasonic-wave  
27            sensor capable of varying a direction of the scanning operation,  
28            wherein the obstacle area predicting unit grasps a  
29            substantially shape of the obstacle which is faced to a side of  
30            the own vehicle based upon the information derived from the first  
31            and second obstacle sensing ~~unit~~ units, and predicts the area  
32            where the obstacle is present, which involving a dimension of the  
33            obstacle.

1            **Claim 7 (original):** The driving assistance apparatus as  
2            claimed in claim 2, wherein the safety area superposing unit  
3            superposes the safety area predicted by the safety area  
4            predicting unit on the image synthesized by the image  
5            synthesizing unit in at least one of a flickering display manner,  
6            a half-tone dot meshing display manner, and a transparent color  
7            display manner.

1            **Claim 8 (original):** The driving assistance apparatus as  
2            claimed in claim 3, wherein the obstacle area superposing unit  
3            superposes the obstacle area predicted by the obstacle area  
4            predicting unit on the image synthesized by the image  
5            synthesizing unit in at least one of a flickering display manner,  
6            a half-tone dot meshing display manner, and transparent color  
7            display manner.